The Glorious Hereafter and Ourselves

(No. 912)

DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, JANUARY 23, 1870,

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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

"Now He that has worked us for the same thingis God, who also has given unto us the earnest of the Spirit." 2 Corinthians 5:5.

IT is a very comforting thing to be able to see the work of God in our own hearts. We can clearly enough perceive the effects of the Fall—the workings of our inward corruption are always sufficiently perceptible. We have not to search long for the foul handiwork of Satan within us, for his temptations vex us day by day, and too often wound us to our dismay. The evil influences of the world are also exceedingly apparent to the eyes of self-examination. It is, therefore, consoling to the highest degree when, amidst all this disfiguring of the vessel by the hands of evil, we can see growing traces of the Great Artist's hand still fashioning the clay upon the wheel and undoing the mischief of His enemies.

It is a sweet thing to be able to say with the Apostle that God has worked us to the most grand of all designs. When the Creator of the world puts His all-wise hands to the work of our new creation, we are favored in the highest degree, and ought to be filled with gratitude.

It appears from the text that the Apostle found the indications of the Divine work in a groan. Observe, "We that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened." In that groan of his burdened soul he saw the working of the eternal God, and he exclaimed, "He that has worked us for the same thing is God." Believers may trace the finger of God in their holy joys when the soul, like the lark, mounts up towards Heaven and carols her song of gratitude. But, just as surely is the Holy Spirit present in their sorrows for sin, their inward conflicts, their hungering and thirsting after righteousness, their deep-fetched sighs, and their groans which cannot be uttered.

My Brethren, so long as it is the work of God it is comparatively a small matter to us whether our hearts' utterance is song or sigh. Let us be assured that it is worked by the Spirit, and either the one or the other is a token for good. If it is but proven that "the Lord is there," we hear a voice which says, "It is I, be not afraid."

Our text brings before us a great work of God with a distinct object—our being "clothed upon with our house which is from Heaven." And looking at the words minutely, we see that the one design is accomplished by three great processes. The Lord has worked in us desires after the heavenly Glory. "He that has worked us for the same thing is God." The Apostle had twice over spoken of groaning after the heavenly House, and we understand him here to affirm that this groaning was worked in him by God.

Secondly, the Lord has worked in us a fullness for the eternal world, for so the text may be understood. "He that has fitted us for" the heavenly inheritance of which the Spirit is the earnest. Then thirdly, God has given to Believers, in addition to desires after and fitness for an earnest of the Glory to be revealed, which earnest is the Holy Spirit. Let us speak of these three things as the Holy Spirit may instruct us.

God's work is seen in our souls in causing us exciting, vehement DESIRES AFTER being "clothed upon with our house which is from Heaven."

This earnest desire, of which the Apostle has been speaking in the preceding verses, is made up of two things—a painful groaning and sense of being burdened while we are in this present life, and a supreme longing after our promised portion in the world to come. Dissatisfaction with the very idea of finding a continuing city here, amounting even to groaning, is the condition of the Christian's mind. "We look not at the things which are seen," they are not worth a glance. They are temporal and therefore quite unfit to be the joy of an immortal spirit.

The Christian is the most contented man in the world, but he is the least contented with the world. He is like a traveler in an inn, perfectly satisfied with the inn and its accommodation, considering it as an inn, but putting quite out of all consideration the idea of making it his home. He waits by the way, and is thankful, but his desires lead him ever on-

ward towards that better country where the many mansions are prepared. The Believer is like a man in a sailing vessel, well content with the good ship for what it is, and hopeful that it may bear him safely across the sea, willing to put up with all its inconveniences without complaint.

But if you ask him whether he would choose to live on board in that narrow cabin, he will tell you that he longs for the time when the harbor shall be in view, and the green fields, and the happy homesteads of his native land. We, my Brethren, thank God for all the appointments of Providence—whether our portion is large or scant we are content because God has appointed it—yet our portion is not here, nor would we have it here if we might!—

"We've no abiding city here,

Sad truth were this to be our home." No thought would be more dreadful to us than the idea of having our portion in this life, in this dark world which refused the love of Jesus, and cast Him out of its vineyard. We have desires which the whole world could not fulfill. We have insatiable yearnings which a thousand empires could not satisfy. The Creator has made us to pant and long after Himself, and all the creatures put together could not delight our souls without His Presence—

"Hopeless of joy in anything below,
We only long to soar,
The fullness of His love to feel,
And lose His smile no more."

In addition to this dissatisfaction, there reigns within the regenerate heart a supreme longing after the heavenly state. When Believers are in their right minds, their aspirations after Heaven are so forcible that they despise death itself. When faith is weak, then the pains and the groans of dying make a black cloud of forebodings which darken the spirit, and we shrink from the thought of departing.

But when we know that our Redeemer lives, and look forward to the Resurrection and to the Glory to be revealed, we cry—

"Oh, if my Lord would come and meet,
My soul should stretch her wings in haste,
Fly fearless through death's iron gate, Nor fear the terrors as she passed." Whatever the separation of the soul from the body may involve of pain or mystery, the Believer feels that he could dare it all to enter at once into the unfading joys of Heaven. Sometimes the heir of Heaven grows impatient of his bondage. Like a captive looking out of the narrow window of his prison beholds the green fields of the unfettered earth, and marks the flashing waves of the ocean, ever free—and hears the songs of the free tenants of the air—he weeps as he views his narrow cell and hears the clanking of his chains.

There are times when the most patient of the Lord's banished ones feel the home sickness strong upon them. Like those beasts which we have sometimes seen in our menageries, which pace to and fro in their dens, and chafe themselves against the bars—uneasy, unhappy, bursting out every now and then into fierce roars—as though they yearned for the forest or the jungle. Even so we also chafe and fret in this, our prison, longing to be free. As by the waters of Babylon the sons of Zion sat down and wept, even so do we. Dwelling in Kedar's tents and sojourning with Mesech, we long for the wings of a dove that we might fly away and be at rest—

"O my sweet home, Jerusalem,
Would God I were in you!
Would God my woes were at an end,
Your joys that I might see."

Having thus seen that the groaning worked in us by God is made up of dissatisfaction with this world and anxious desire for the world to come, we may profitably consider it yet a little further. What is it that makes the Christian long for Heaven? What is that within him which makes him restless till he reaches the better land? It is, first, a desire for the unseen. The carnal mind is satisfied with what the eyes can see, the hands can handle, and the taste enjoy. But the Christian has a spirit within him which has passions and appetites which the senses cannot gratify.

This spirit has been created, developed, enlightened, and instructed by the Holy Spirit, and it lives in a world of unseen realities of which unregenerate men have no knowledge. While in this sinful world and earthly body, the spirit feels

like a citizen exiled from his native land. It stands upon the outmost borders of its own region and longs to penetrate into the center of spiritual things. Hampered with this body of clay, the spirit, which is akin to angels, cries after liberty. It longs to see the Great Father of Spirits, to commune with the bands of the pure spirits forever surrounding the Throne of God, both angels and glorified men.

It longs, in fact, to dwell in its true element. A spiritual creature, begotten from above can never rest till it is present with the Lord. Oh, to see the things which we have heard of in metaphor and simile, to enjoy them really with our spirits! The harps, the crowns, the palms—what must it be to possess such joys? The streets of transparent gold, the river of the water of life, the glassy sea, the Throne of the Great King—what must all these be? Until these joys and glories be all our own, our souls will always cry and sigh.

Moreover, the Christian spirit pants after holiness. He who is born again of incorruptible seed finds his worst trouble to be sin. While he was in his natural state he loved sin, and sought pleasure in it. But now, being born of God and made liken to God, he hates sin. The mention of it vexes his ears. The sight of it in others causes him deep sorrow—the presence of it in his own heart is his daily plague and burden. If he could be rid of sin, this mortal body might not be to him a load. But because the tendencies of the animal passions are always towards evil, he longs to be rid of this vile body so that he may be clothed with his House which is in Heaven—from which all these passions will be expelled.

Oh, to be without the tendency to sin, without the possibility to sin! What bliss the prospect affords! My Brethren, if we could be placed in the meanest and most destitute condition, and yet could be perfect, we would prefer it to being sinful, even though we should reign in the palaces of kings. Our spirit, therefore, cries after the immortal state, because sin will be forever banished from it.

In the Christian's spirit there is also a sighing after rest. "There remains a rest for the people of God," as though God had put in us the longing for what He has prepared. We labor daily to enter into that rest. Brethren, we long for rest, but we cannot find it here. "This is not our rest." We cannot find rest even within ourselves. Wars and fights are continuous within the regenerate spirit. The flesh lusts against the spirit, and the spirit wars against the flesh. As long as we are here it must be so. We are in the camp of war, not in the chamber of ease. The trumpet must sound, and the clash of arms must be heard. We must go to our watchtower and continue there both night and day, for we are militant as yet, and not triumphant.

Our soul pines to be at rest. When shall the rowers of our spirit indulge themselves to the full without the fear of falling into sin? When shall my memory remember nothing but what will glorify God? When shall my judgment always rightly balance all events? When shall my desires be after nothing but my Lord? When shall my affections cling to nothing but Him? O when shall I possess the rest of the sinless, the rest of the satiated, the rest of

the secure, the rest of the victorious? This longing for rest helps to inflame the Christian's desires for the House not made with hands.

This Divinely-worked desire is made up of another element, namely, a thirst for communion with God. Here, at the nearest, our state is described as being "absent from the Lord." We do enjoy fellowship with God, for, "Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ," but it is remote and dark. "We see through a glass darkly," and not as yet face to face. We have the smell of His garments from afar, and they are perfumed with myrrh, and aloes, and cassia—but as yet the King is in His ivory palaces—and the gate of pearl is between us and Him.

O that we could come to Him! O that He would even now embrace us, and kiss us with the kisses of His mouth! The more the heart loves Christ, the more it longs for the greatest possible nearness to Him. Separation is very painful to a bride whose heart is burning for the bridegroom's presence. And such are we—longing to hear the most sweet voice of our Spouse and to see the countenance which is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars. For a saved soul to long to be where its Savior is, is no unnatural desire! To be with Him is far better than earth's best, and it would be strange if we did not long for it.

God, then, has worked in us this in all its forms. He has made us to dread the thought of having our portion in this life. He has created in us a supreme longing for our heavenly Home, has taught us to value unseen and eternal things, to pant after holiness, to sigh after sinless rest, and to yearn after closer fellowship with God in Christ Jesus. My Brethren, if you have felt a desire such as I have described, give the glory of it to God! Bless and love the Holy Spirit who has worked this same thing in you, and ask Him to make the desires yet more vehement, for they are to His glory.

Bear with a word in praise of this God-worked groaning. This desire after the world to come is above ordinary nature. All flesh is grass, and the grass loves to strike its root deep into the earth. It has no tendrils with which to clasp the stars. Man by nature would be content to abide on earth forever. If you long for a holy and spiritual state, your desire is not of nature's creation. God has worked it in you. Yes, I will venture to say that the desire for Heaven is contrary to nature. For as there is an inertia in matter which makes it indisposed to move, so is there in human nature an indisposition to leave the present for the future.

Like the snail, we stick to the rock on which we crawl. We cling to earth like the ivy to the wall. We are afraid to set sail upon that unknown sea of eternity, and therefore shiver on the shore. We dread to leave "the warm precincts of this house of clay," and hovel as this body is, we count it dear. It is the Lord who forbids our lying among the pots and gives us the wings of a dove to mount aloft. As soon would a clod seek the sun as a soul seek its God, if a miracle of Grace were not worked upon it.

While they are contrary to the old nature, such aspirations prove the existence of the new nature. You may be quite sure that you have the nature of God in you if you are pining

after God. And if your longings are of a spiritual kind, depend upon it—you are a spiritual man. It is not in the animal to sigh after mental enjoyments, neither is it in the mere carnal man to sigh after heavenly things. What your desires are, that your soul is. If you are really insatiably hungering after holiness and after God, there is within you that which is liken to God, that which is essentially holy. There is, indeed, a work of the Holy Spirit within your hearts.

I shall detain you awhile to notice the means by which the Holy Spirit quickens these desires within our spirits. This desire after a portion in the unseen world is first infused in us by regeneration. Regeneration begets in us a spiritual nature, and the spiritual nature brings with it its own longings and desires. These longings and desires are after perfection and God. Imagine an angel imprisoned in a stable—it is perfectly certain that it would be discontent with the place where the horned oxen lay. If it felt that the Divine will commanded it to tarry there for awhile, I doubt not that the bright visitant would contentedly put up with the confinement.

But if it had liberty to leave the society of beasts, how gladly would the bright spirit ascend to its native place! Yes, Heaven is the place for angels, the true abode of holy spirits and we, too, since our spiritual nature is born from above, long to be there—nor shall we be content until we are. These desires are further assisted by instruction. The more the Holy Spirit teaches us of the world to come the more we long for it. If a child had lived in a mine it might be content with the glimmer of candle light. But if it should hear of the sun, the green fields and the stars, you may depend upon it—the child would not be happy until it could ascend the shaft and behold for itself the brightness of which it had heard. And as the Holy Spirit reveals to us the world to come we feel longings within us, mysterious but mighty, and we sigh and cry to be where Jesus is.

These desires are further increased by sanctified afflictions. Thorns in our nest make us take to our wings. The embittering of this cup makes us earnestly desire to drink of the new wine of the kingdom. We are very much like our poor who would stay at home in England and put up with their lot, hard though it is. But when at last there comes a worse distress than usual, then straightway they talk of emigrating to those fair and boundless fields across the Atlantic where a kindred nation will welcome them with joy.

So here we are in our poverty, and we make the best of it we can. But a sharp distress wounds our spirit and then we say we will run away to Canaan, to the land that flows with milk and honey. For there, we think, we shall suffer no distress, neither shall our spirits hunger any more. Heavenly desires are still farther inflamed by communion with Christ. The sweets as well as the bitters may be made to increase our longings after the world to come. When a man has once known what fellowship with Jesus is, he then pines to enjoy it forever. Like the Gauls on this side the Alps, who, when they had once drank the Italian wines, said one to another, "It must be a fair land where they grow such wine as this. Come,

Brethren, let us draw our swords and cross the Alps and take the vineyards for ourselves." Thus does the love of Jesus set us longing to be with Him—

"Since I have tasted of the grapes, I oftentimes long to go Where my dear Lord the vineyard keeps, And all the clusters grow."

Communion with Christ sharpens the edge of our desire for Heaven. And so, to close this vein of thought, does elevation of soul. The more we are sanctified and lifted above the grossness of earthliness into conformity with Jesus, the more we long for the world to come.

A peasant at the plow is quite content to mix with his fellow laborers—but suppose he forms a passion for the study of the stars, feels a poet's frenzy, develops mathematical powers, learns the science of flowers—or in any way discovers the treasure hidden in the field of learning? He will be sure to be uneasy in ignorance, and will pine for books and education. He dreams of schools, and colleges, and libraries. His fellow plowmen laugh at him and count him but a fool. If they have enough to eat and drink and clothe themselves, they are content—but he has wants for which the village has neither sympathy nor supply.

His elevation of mind has brought with it groans—desires to which, had he no more ambition than his fellows—he would have been a stranger. So is it with the regenerated man—in proportion as he is elevated by the Holy Spirit by growth in Divine Grace, the higher he rises—the more he longs to rise. To him that has, it is given, and he desires to have in abundance. With a sacred covetousness he pants after yet higher degrees of Grace, and after Glory itself. Thus have I opened up to you the desire which the Holy Spirit works in us. "He that has worked us for the same thing is God."

II. Our second subject of discourse is THE FITNESS FOR HEAVEN which is worked in us. Calvin's interpretation of the text is, "He that has fitted us for the same thing is God." Ah, how true this is! There is no fitness whatever in man by nature for communion with his God. It must be a Divine work within him. The Father works in us fitness for Heaven by separating us in the everlasting decree to be His own. Heaven is the place of God's own abode—we must be God's own people to be fit to be there. He fits us by adopting us into His family, by justifying us through the righteousness of Jesus Christ, by preserving us by His power.

The Son of God has an equal share in the working of this fitness. He fits us by blotting out our iniquities and by transferring to us His righteousness—by taking us into marriage union with Himself. The Holy Spirit, forever to be blessed, has His share in this work. It is He who first infuses the new nature. He who gives us spiritual food for the new nature, giving us to feed upon the flesh and blood of Christ. It is He who instructs and develops that new nature, and through the blood of Jesus makes the man meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light. Glory be unto the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, who thus in blessed union "has worked us for the same thing."

Now, let me describe with great brevity the work of the Holy Spirit in preparing us for Glory. As we have already hinted—and we must necessarily traverse much the same ground—fitness for Heaven, as worked in us by the Spirit, consists, first, in the possession of a spiritual nature. Heaven is pre-eminently a spiritual region and those who have no nature begotten from above would not by any possibility be able to enjoy the bliss of Heaven. They would be quite out of their element. It could not be a Heaven to them. A garden bee in the midst of the flowers is at home and gathers honey from all their cups and bells.

But open the gate and admit a swine, and it sees no beauty in lilies, roses, or other flowers. Therefore it proceeds to root, and tear, and spoil in all directions. Such would an unregenerate man be in Heaven. While holy saints shall find bliss in everything in the Paradise of God, an ungodly sinner would be at war with everything in that holy region. Fitness for Heaven lies much in a holy nature—a love of Heaven is as contrary to fallen humanity as light to darkness. Do you not feel it so? Left to yourselves, O saints of God, do you not know that you would go back to Egypt? Do you not feel that the old nature lusts after evil?

Well, then, as you cannot possibly inherit Heaven unless you delight in holiness, you owe this fitness for the perfect state to the Holy Spirit. Fitness for Heaven lies in a capacity to delight in God. I have always loved that first question and answer in the Assembly's Catechism, "What is the chief end of man? The chief end of man is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever." Not to enjoy yourself forever, not even to enjoy the harps of gold, the angelic society and the feasts of the beatified—but to enjoy God forever. If a man has as yet no delight in God and takes no solace in thoughts of Him, he has no fitness for Heaven, and cannot get there. But if you delight in God, it is God that has "worked you to the same

thing."

Fitness for Heaven will lie very much in love to the saints. Those who do not love the people of God on earth would find their company very irksome forever. Here the unrighteous can manage to endure the company of the godly because it can be diluted with an admixture of graceless men. But up there the people shall be all righteous and their conversation

shall be all of Christ and of things Divine—such society and such conversation would be weariness, itself, to godless hearts. My Hearer, if you delight in the company of the Believers—and if the more spiritual their conversation the more you enjoy it—then you have been worked to this same thing by the work of the Holy Spirit in your soul, and you may bless the Lord for it.

Joy in service is another sweet preparation for Heaven. Heaven is sinless service. They serve God day and night in His Temple—service without weariness, service without imperfection, service without cessation. Now do you delight to serve God? If so, you evidently have a fitness for Heaven. But as you once abhorred that service, and were the bondslave of

the Prince of Darkness—if you now long and wish to glorify your God—you have been worked thereto by the Holy Spirit's power.

Conformity to Christ Jesus, again, is another preparation for Heaven. Much of Heaven consists in being like Christ. It is the very object of Divine Grace that we should be conformed to His image, that He should be the first-born among many Brethren. Now, if you are growing, by His Grace, somewhat like Christ—if you desire to be like He is, imitating His tender, loving, brave, prayerful, obedient, self-sacrificing spirit—you have some fitness for the skies. But that fitness was not there by nature. You were once as unlike Christ as possible. God has worked all this in you.

I am afraid that I go from one point to another rather too rapidly, but the gist of it all is this—Heaven is the world of spirits, the land of holiness, the House of God— and if we have any capacity for the enjoyment of Heaven, it has been worked in us by God. The unfitness of unrenewed souls for Heaven may be illustrated by the incapacity of certain uneducated and coarse-minded persons for elevated thoughts and intellectual pursuits.

When a little child, I lived some years in my grandfather's house. In his garden there was a fine old hedge of yew of considerable length which was clipped and trimmed till it made quite a wall of verdure. Behind it was a wide grass walk which looked upon the fields. The grass was kept mown, so as to make pleasant walking. Here, ever since the old Puritan Chapel was built, godly divines had walked and prayed and meditated. My grandfather was likely to use it as his study. Up and down it he would walk when preparing his sermons, and always on Sundays when it was fair, he had half an hour there before preaching.

To me it seemed to be a perfect Paradise, and being forbidden to stay there when Grandfather was meditating, I viewed it with no small degree of awe. I love to think of the green and quiet walk at this moment. But I was once shocked, and even horrified, by hearing a farming man remark concerning this sanctum sanctorum, "It' ud grow a many 'taturs if it wor ploughed up." What cared he for holy memories? What were meditation and contemplation to him? Is it the chief end of man to grow potatoes and eat them? Such, on a larger scale, would be an unconverted man's estimate of joys so elevated and refined as those of Heaven.

Alphonse Karr tells a story of a man servant who asked his master to be allowed to leave his cottage and sleep over the stable. What was the matter with his cottage? "Why, Sir, the nightingales all around the cottage make such a 'jug, jug, jug' at night, that I cannot bear them." A man with a musical ear would be charmed with the nightingales' song— but here was a man without a musical soul who found the sweetest notes a nuisance. This is a feeble image of the incapacity of unregenerate man for the enjoyments of the world to come—as he is incapable of enjoying them, so is he incapable of longing for them.

But if you and I have grown out of all taste for the things of sin and time. If we are sighing for holy, godly joys, we have therein an evidence that God has worked in us, by His Grace, and will continue to do so till we are made perfect and immortal.

III. The text informs us that in addition to working in us desires and fitness for Glory, the Lord has graciously given to us an EARNEST OF GLORY. An earnest, as you all know, is unlike a pledge, in some respects. A pledge has to be returned when the matter which it ensures is obtained—but an earnest is a part of the thing itself. A man has so much wage to take on Saturday night, he receives a part of it in the middle of the week, it is an earnest of the full payment—a part of the payment itself.

So the Holy Spirit is a part of Heaven itself. The work of the Holy Spirit in the soul is the bud of Heaven. Divine Grace is not a thing which will be taken away from us when we enter Heaven, but which will develop into Glory. Grace will not be withdrawn as though it had answered its purpose, but will be matured into Glory. What is meant by the Holy

Spirit being given to us as an earnest? I believe it signifies, first, that the very dwelling of the Holy Spirit within our soul is the earnest of Heaven.

My Brothers and Sisters, if God Himself condescends to make these bodies His temples, is not this akin to Heaven's honors? Only put away sin, and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit would make even this earthly state to be heavenly to us. O my Brethren, you little know what a weight of Glory is contained in the indwelling of the Holy Spirit! If you did but know it and believe in it always, the sorrows of this life would become trivial, and as for the frowns of men you would deride them. God dwells in you. You walk among the sons of men unknown and despised, yet as angels see you, you are the objects of their wonder! Rejoice that in this, then, you have an earnest of Heaven.

But everything the Holy Spirit works in us is an earnest of Heaven. When the Holy Spirit brings to us the joys of hope, this is an earnest. While singing some glowing hymn touching the New Jerusalem, our spirit shakes off all her doubts and fears and anticipates her everlasting heritage. When we enjoy the full assurance of faith and read our title clear to mansions in the skies—when faith, looking simply to the finished work of Christ, knows whom she has believed, and is persuaded that he is able to keep that which she has committed to Him—this is an earnest of Heaven. Is not Heaven security, confidence, peace?

The security, confidence, peace which spring from faith in Jesus Christ are part and parcel of the Heaven of the blessed. Heaven is the place of victory, and, my dear Friends, when we are victorious over sin, when the Holy Spirit enables us to overcome some propensity, to put down our anger, to crush our pride, to mortify the flesh with its affections and lusts—then in that conscious victory over sin we enjoy an earnest of the triumph of Heaven. And once more, when the Holy Spirit gives us to enjoy fellowship with Jesus Christ, and with one another—when in the breaking of bread we feel the union which exists between Christ and His members—we have a foretaste of the fellowship of Heaven.

Do not say, then, that you know nothing of what Heaven is. "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love Him." But, "He has revealed them unto us by His Spirit." Spiritual natures do know what Heaven is—in the sense of knowing from the drop what the river must be like—of understanding from the beam what the sun must be. Its fullness you cannot measure, its depth you cannot fathom, its unutterable bliss you cannot tell.

But still you know of what character the Glory will be—you know that pure are the joys of the blessed, and all their dwellings peace. You know that fellowship with Christ and with holy spirits makes up much of Heaven, and you know this because the earnest of the Spirit is a part and parcel of the thing itself.

I conclude with a practical remark or two. If these things are so, what emotions are most fitting for us? Answer— first, O Believers in Jesus, be thankful! Overflow with thankfulness. Remember these things are not your own productions. They are not flowers of your own garden—they have been planted in your soul by another Hand—and watered by a superior Power. Give all the glory to His holy name, for to Him all the glory belongs. Not a good desire in you was self-originated, no part of your fitness for Paradise was self-formed. Grace has done it, Divine Grace has done it all!

Adore and bless the Holy Spirit who has worked all your works in you, for you are "His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them." Be thankful! As the birds created sing to pour out their song. As the flowers, the handiwork of God, load the air with their perfume—so sing— and let your lives be all-fragrant with gratitude to Him who has worked you to the same thing.

Another emotion we ought all to feel who have this worked in us is that of reverence. When a scholar knows that all he has learned has been taught him by his master, he looks up from his master's feet into his master's face with respectful reverence and esteem. O reverence the Holy Spirit! Let us, in our public ministry, and in our private meditations always stand in awe of Him. I am afraid we too much forget Him—let us, instead, reverence Him especially by obedience to His faintest monitions. As the leaves of the aspen tremble to the faintest breath of the wind, so may we tremble to the faintest breath of God's Holy Spirit.

Let us prize the Word of God because He wrote it. Let us love the ordinances because He puts life and power into them. Let us love His indwelling, and never grieve Him lest He hide His face from us. "He that has worked us for the same thing is God." Vex not His Spirit, but anxiously ask that He would continue His work, and complete it in righteousness.

Lastly, our heart ought to feel great confidence this morning. If the good thing had been worked by ourselves, we might be sure that it would fail before long. Nothing of mortal man was ever perfect. But if He that has begun the good

work is God, there is no fear that He will forsake or leave His work undone. They shall never say of Him, " He began to build and was not able to finish." No war of His was ever

undertaken and then given up because He had not counted the cost. God has begun, God will complete. His promise is "Yes and amen," and never was forfeited yet. Therefore let us be well assured, and let our hearts be glad.

Dear Hearers, the unhappy thing about this is that there are so many who have no desires for the blessed hereafter, no fitness for it, no earnest of it. Ah, then, the prophecies that are within you—what do they foretell? No yearning for Heaven—does not that foretell that there is no Heaven for you? No fitness for the Presence of God. What does that say? Why, that in the Presence of God you shall not rest. Earnest of the Spirit? Why, you almost laugh at the idea. Ah, then, no earnest is a proof that there is no reward for you.

But what then? Will you be annihilated? Will you pass out of this existence and cease to be? Dark as were that prospect—yes, dark as midnight—yet were it brighter than the fate which the Word of God allots you. There will be darkness, but you shall live in it. There will be death, but in it you must ceaselessly exist. For if the righteous are promised "life eternal," it is also written, "these shall go away into everlasting punishment." God save you from such woe by leading you to trust the Savior. Then you will confess with us, "He that has worked us for the same thing is God," and unto God be the glory. Amen.